



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA Presents...AWARD LUNCHEON TO HONOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS AND CHAMPIONS

(Note New Date and special appearance from SBA's Administrator, Hector Barreto)

SANTA ANA, CALIF – The Santa Ana District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will honor a distinguished group of small businesses at the annual Small Business Award Luncheon on Tuesday, April 18, 2006. SBA Celebrates its 43rd year of awards with the theme “Small Business...the Ultimate Reality.” As a part of National Small Business Week, this award program pays tribute to the men and women who represent the best of America’s entrepreneurial spirit. The luncheon is hosted by the Orange County Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Rancho Santiago Community College District, Inland Empire SBDC, Inland Empire Economic Partnership, Riverside Community College and California State University Fullerton.

“We are pleased to announce that for the first time in the history of our event SBA’s Administrator, Hector Barreto, will attend to join us in proudly announcing our 2006 winners. Their entrepreneurial spirit exemplifies the best in our small business community,” announced SBA District Director J. Adalberto Quijada. Over 500 people are expected to attend this year’s event at The Grove of Anaheim in Anaheim.

Rochelle Schneider of RJS Legal and Business Consulting with offices in Tustin and Manhattan Beach has been named Region IX Women in Business Champion of the Year 2006 by SBA. Region IX includes Arizona, California, Hawaii and Nevada.

Walter W. Johnson, owner of Pacific Crossing LLC in Irvine, CA has been named SBA's District Small Business Person of the Year 2006.

The Santa Ana District Office winners are: Mary Gilmore & Tom Gilmore, owners of Computer Career Connection, Inc. in West Covina, Veteran Small Business Champions of the Year; Anita M. Franco, publisher of Fontana Herald News in Fontana, Journalist Champion of the Year; Lenore Johnson, owner of LTJ Graphic Studio in Murrieta, Home-Based Business Champion of the Year; Lorena Maae, Assistant Vice President of Community Relations, Citibank in Fullerton, Minority Small Business Champion of the Year; William B. Im, President and CEO, Uniti Bank in Buena Park, Financial Services Champion of the Year; Ajay Shah, owner of Zustek Corporation in Garden Grove, Young Entrepreneur of the Year; Mukund and Kusum Kavia, owners of Combustion Associates, Inc. in Corona, Exporters of the Year. The finalist for Small Business Person of the Year is Hal Arthur Hays, owner of Hal Hays Construction, Inc. in Riverside, CA.

The Small Business Award Luncheon will be held at the Grove of Anaheim in Anaheim, CA, on April 18, 2006 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The cost of the luncheon is \$65 per person. For more information or to make reservations contact the Orange County SBDC at (714) 564-5202.